

<PROCEEDING> 92-105 , <DATE> 6/04/07 , <NAME> Jeannie Ward, <ADDRESS1> 424 West Superior Street , <ADDRESS2> Suite 402 , <CITY> Duluth , <STATE> MN , <ZIP> 55802 , <FILE-NUMBER> na, <DOCUMENT-TYPE> CO , <PHONE-NUMBER> 218-726-4777 , <DESCRIPTION> Email Comment , <CONTACT-EMAIL> jward@unitedwayduluth.org , <TEXT> United Way 2-1-1 of Northeast Minnesota hereby submits its Reply Comments to Public Notice DA 07-2017, released May 7, 2007. The Public Notice requested comments on the status of implementation of the 211 and 511 Dialing Codes. Further, the Public Notice requested comments on actions the Commission should take if these Dialing Codes are not widely used. United Way 2-1-1 of Northeast Minnesota is limiting its comments to the status of 2-1-1 service in Minnesota. United Way 2-1-1 of Northeast Minnesota has a staff of 3 employees and 3 volunteers and since February 2004 has provided 2-1-1 service to a four-county region in Northeast Minnesota reaching a population of 246,000. The database of service providers used for making referrals has listings for 703 agencies and 1815 services in our area alone. In 2006 our 2-1-1 call center received 6580 calls. The most common reasons clients give for calling United Way 2-1-1 of Northeast Minnesota are for financial assistance, housing and health care options. When Minnesota residents get dropped from our state sponsored health insurance program, MinnesotaCare, they receive a letter telling them to call 2-1-1 for options. We refer callers to sliding-fee clinics, public health, prescription assistance programs and send them a Health Resources Guide to help get them through until they can get health insurance. Recently residents of Northeast Minnesota were evacuated from their homes during the Ham Lake wildfire. United Way 2-1-1 worked overtime to make sure needed resources were in the database so callers with questions on evacuee information, where to send donations and general information on the fire were connected with appropriate services. United Way 2-1-1 of Northeast Minnesota has worked closely with community partners, including the True North Volunteer Center, the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging and St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services. Our staff devoted significant time and resources to implementing and operating the 2-1-1 service to ease access for people in need to information about health and human services. We respectfully request that the Commission find the public is well-served by the use of 2-1-1, that the Commission continue to support the 2-1-1 Dialing Code for this purpose, and that the Commission use its authority to facilitate more widespread use of the service.